

~~MOSS, O. T.~~

INTERVIEW

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244

BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

245

Field Worker's name Virgil CourseyThis report made on (date) July 21 19371. Name O. T. Moss2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 415 East Broadway4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 13 Year 18735. Place of birth Georgia6. Name of Father L. R. Moss Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Georgia

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Moss' mother died when he was quite small.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_.

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4968

Virgil Coursey  
Interviewer  
July 21, 1937

Interview with O. T. Moss  
Altus, Oklahoma.

I came to Oklahoma from Van Alstine, Texas, in January, 1892. I was a young fellow, single. The remainder of the family consisting of my stepmother, father, and nine children, remained at home. My own mother died when I was quite small. I can hardly remember her at all.

After arriving here I began immediately breaking out sod, and got everything ready for the family to move in April. We settled north of the base line near Clustee. Later, in order to have one-half section all together, we traded for a place south of the base line.

Our first crop was not very good. We planted wheat mostly. Later we tried a little alfalfa. The principal foods raised were sweet potatoes and black-eyed peas. There were plenty of fish in Turkey and Boggy Creeks, and one could catch all they needed in a short time. Beef clubs were organized and members furnished beeves in rotation. In this way fresh beef was available at regular intervals. Tallow was used for shortening because there were few if any hogs in the country. Later, people began raising hogs. We thought it would be impossible to raise hogs without corn to feed them, but we soon

learned that they would do very well on sweet potatoes and wheat. After maize was introduced to this country it was used extensively for hog feed:

Trips to market were long and tiresome. Vernon was our closest point where supplies could be had. Several wagons were usually taken on these trips so that the teams could be doubled at the river. One team could not pull an empty wagon through the sand in the river bed, much less a loaded one. So neighbors made the trip together to help each other at the crossing. Strawing the river bed helped a great deal. wheat was the usual commodity carried to market by the pioneers. This was exchanged for coal and food. It was necessary to buy supplies in large quantities because these trips could not be made oftener than once a month or six weeks. There was too much work to be done at home.

In the earliest days there were no organized churches. Some times travelling preachers would come through the country and stop at school houses or preach at some residence. People went from ten to fifteen miles to church. Later when churches were organized, protracted meetings were held.

-3-

The main social events in those days were all day singings on Sundays. People would come for twenty-five miles around and bring large quantities of food. I can remember people bringing whole tubs full of pies, cakes, fried chicken and other good things to eat. The food was all laid out on table cloths and everyone ate together.

Uncle Tull Bradley moved here before we did. He had a son, W. L. Bradley. There was also a Charlie Smith at Doan's Crossing that I knew back in Texas. These are the only people I knew in the early days.

The pioneer days were days of privation and hardships. There was not much sickness, but when one did get sick it was hard to get a doctor, because there were very few doctors in the country. Living in dugouts was both dangerous and inconvenient. It was not unusual to be awakened in the night by a scratching noise, which investigation proved to be caused by a centipede or perhaps a long snake. Sometimes we had to go to the Gyp Hills and get mesquite roots for cooking purposes. These roots were secured by placing a crowbar under them and prying them loose.

I went back to Texas and married when I was twenty-four years of age. I married Ella George. We lived in

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4968

~~-4-~~

Texas some time and moved to Eldorado in 1903. I followed the barbering trade at Eldorado for thirteen years. I have lived in Altus since 1916.